

Appl. No. 09/886,687
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Reply to Office Action of January 13, 2006

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (previously presented) An inventory agent for a component audit and inventory management system, the inventory agent comprising executable code for implementing:

a receiver including means for receiving an inventory-commence message from a client computer over a data network;

a detector including means for collecting hardware and software inventory data relating to hardware and software installed on a target device in response to commands included in the inventory-commence message; and

a transmitter including means for transmitting to a host unit of the component audit and inventory management system, through the data network, an inventory-data message including the inventory data associated with the target device.

Claim 2 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 1, wherein the receiver includes means for comparing the identity of the inventory-commence message with the identity of the inventory agent.

Claim 3 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 2, wherein the inventory agent includes means for terminating the inventory data collection if the identity of the inventory-commence message is not associated with the identity of the inventory agent.

Claim 4 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inventory-commence message is an electronic mail message retrievable by the target device when it connects to the data network.

Claim 5 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inventory-commence message receipt, inventory data collection, and inventory-data message transmission are transparent to a user of the target device.

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Claim 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 1, wherein the collected inventory data is saved directly to a file in executable language statements for incorporation into a database.

Claim 8 (previously presented) An inventory agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the executable language statements include Structured Query Language (SQL) statements.

Claims 9 - 32 (cancelled)

Claim 33 (previously presented) A component audit and inventory management system comprising:

- a host unit, resident in a host computer, the host computer comprising a processor, memory, and user interface; and

- a host message handling system operatively connected to the host unit and accessible to a data network;

- the host unit including:

- means for receiving a request-inventory message from a client computer via the host message handling system,

- means for generating an inventory-commence message in response to the request-inventory message, and for forwarding the inventory-commence message to the client computer via the host message handling system;

- means for receiving hardware and software inventory data associated with hardware and software installed on a target device associated with the client and collected electronically from the target device, the inventory data having been collected by an inventory agent installed on the target device and activated by the inventory-commence message; and

- means for aggregating inventory data from a plurality of target devices associated with the client.

Claim 34 (cancelled)

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Claim 35 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 33, wherein the inventory-commence message comprises:

an identifier including means for verifying the identity of the inventory agent installed on the target device; and

a trigger including means for causing the inventory agent to commence collecting inventory data from the target device.

Claim 36 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 35, wherein the inventory-commence message further includes an install-catalyst means including means for initiating download of a new inventory agent from the host unit if the identifier fails to verify the identity of the inventory agent.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 35, wherein the inventory-commence message further includes a sequential pulse number.

Claim 38 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 33, wherein the inventory agent is resident on the target device as a software agent and comprises executable code for implementing:

a receiver including means for receiving an inventory-commence message from the client computer over the data network;

a detector including means for collecting hardware and software inventory data associated with the target device in response to the inventory-commence message; and

a transmitter including means for transmitting to the host unit, via the data network, an inventory-data message including the inventory data associated with the target device.

Claim 39 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 38, wherein the receiver includes means for comparing the identity of the inventory-commence message with the identity of the inventory agent.

Claim 40 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 39, wherein the inventory agent includes means for terminating the inventory data collection if the identity of the inventory-commence message is not associated with the identity of the inventory agent.

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Claim 41 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 38, wherein the inventory-commence message is an electronic mail message retrievable by the target device when it connects to the data network.

Claim 42 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 38, wherein the inventory-commence message receipt, inventory data collection, and inventory-data message transmission are invisible to a user of the target device.

Claim 43 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 38, wherein the collected inventory data is saved directly to a file in executable language statements for incorporation into a database associated with the host unit.

Claim 44 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 38, wherein the executable language statements include Structured Query Language (SQL) statements.

Claim 45 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 43, wherein the host unit includes means for interpreting the executable language statements as command line statements.

Claim 46 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 33, further including means for forwarding the aggregated inventory data to the client via the host message handling system.

Claim 47 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 33, further including a migration analysis engine.

Claim 48 (previously presented) The inventory management system of claim 33, further including a replacement analysis engine.